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Australia opens new imaging facility to boost research and healthcare

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To strengthen Australia's ability to underpin large-cohort imaging projects



A new multimillion dollar imaging facility that will underpin Western Australia’s access to potentially life-changing clinical trials in neuroscience, cancer and a new generation of technologies was launched recently by Science and Medical Research Minister Stephen Dawson.

The Western Australia's National Imaging Facility (WA NIF) Node now has WA’s first research-dedicated human MRI and PET-CT imaging technologies to add to its existing preclinical capability. Based at the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, the project is led by The University of Western Australia and the Western Australian Health Translation Network.

Among key projects hoping to benefit from the human MRI is a study led by Professor Fiona Wood and Associate Professor Mark Fear to compare the brains of children who have had a burn injury to those of the same age who have not had a burn. This follows earlier studies that found children who had burn injuries were more likely to be admitted to hospital for mental health treatment — Professor Wood’s research team is currently seeking funding for the novel study.

An Alzheimer’s disease study, led by Curtin University’s Professor John Mamo, will use both the PET-CT and MRI to investigate the impact of the cholesterol-lowering drug Probucol on cognitive function.

The National Imaging Facility (NIF) is Australia’s Advanced Imaging Network and has contributed $4.42 million to the new WA facility through the Australian Government’s National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS). This investment includes new equipment for the manufacture of radiopharmaceuticals to be housed in the new cyclotron laboratories at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital.